

In The Claims

Kindly enter the claim amendments, without prejudice, as set forth below. A complete listing of the claims is provided, with a parenthetical indication of the status of each claim and markings to show current changes.

CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A molten metal discharging device between a first upper container (1) and a second container placed below the first container wherein said first container comprises a ring shaped blade (15), fixed to the base of the first container around a molten metal discharging aperture (20), a nozzle (19), inserted into said aperture with the lower end protruding from it and in which said second container (2) comprises an outlet sleeve (5) the lower end of which is suitable for being coupled with said lower end of the nozzle (19), elastic means (9, 10, 11, 12) adapted to push said outlet sleeve upwards, a cylindrical sheath (3) surrounding said outlet sleeve (5) and said elastic means, gas sealing means (17) ~~of sealing gas~~ between said sheath (3) and said ring shaped blade (15).
2. (original) The device according to claim 1 wherein in the operating position of coupling between said first and second containers, said sheath (3) and said ring shaped blade (15) delimit a ring shaped gas tight chamber (25).
3. (currently amended) The device according to claim 2 wherein there are provided gas supplying means (21) for supplying gas to the interior of said ring shaped chamber.
4. (original) The device according to claim 1 wherein said nozzle (19) and said outlet sleeve (5) are of refractory material.
5. (original) The device according to claim 1 wherein said blade (15) and said sheath (3) are coaxial with said outlet sleeve (5).
6. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~ wherein said elastic means (9, 10, 11, 12) comprise a helical spring which imposes a force in the axial direction on the outlet sleeve (5).
7. (currently amended) The device according to claim 6 wherein said spring (9) is coaxial with the outlet sleeve (5) and a beaker (10) is interposed between the spring itself and the outlet sleeve (5), ~~and beaker through which the spring transmits force~~

wherein a force is transmitted by the spring to the outlet sleeve (5) through said beaker.

8. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~ wherein said outlet sleeve (5) penetrates inside the lower container.
9. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~ wherein said gas sealing means (17) ~~for producing a gas seal between said sheath and said blade~~ comprise a sand joint.
10. (currently amended) The device according to claim 1 ~~any preceding claim~~ wherein ~~the~~ a duct of said nozzle (19) has a diameter inferior to that of ~~the~~ a duct of said outlet sleeve (5).
11. (currently amended) The device according to claim 3 ~~any of the preceding claims~~ wherein said gas supplying means (21) ~~of feeling gas inside said ring shaped chamber (25)~~ comprise a tube which crosses said blade (15) and a ring shaped distribution chamber (22).

Applicant requests examination of the newly amended claims.

If any matters remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned by telephone at (617) 557-2900.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 50-0374** referencing docket no. 1182.014/3214PTUS. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

Richard L. Sampson
Registration No. 37,231

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Sampson & Associates, P.C.
50 Congress Street
Boston, MA 02109
Telephone: (617) 557-2900
Facsimile: (617) 557-0077